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Date: April 13, 2000
Docket No.: 0905-0233P-SP

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box PATENT APPLICATION
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of
Inventor(s): SOGA, Takashi

For: DIGITAL STILL CAMERA AND METHOD OF CONTROLLING THE SAME

Enclosed are:

☒ A specification consisting of 18 pages

☒ 08 sheet(s) of Formal drawings

☒ An assignment of the invention

☒ Certified copy of Priority Document(s)

☒ Executed Declaration ☒ Original ☐ Photocopy

☐ A verified statement to establish small entity status under 37
CFR 1.9 and 37 CFR 1.27

☐ Preliminary Amendment

☐ Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 and reference(s)

04/13/00
10713 U.S. PRO

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09/549044
04/13/00

Other _____

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Respectfully submitted,

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SPECIFICATION

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

5

DIGITAL STILL CAMERA AND METHOD OF CONTROLLING THE SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

10 The present invention relates to a digital still camera for recording on a recording medium image data obtained by imaging with the image data related to a frame number and a method of controlling the same.

Background of the Invention

15 Digital still cameras are for imaging a subject to obtain image data representing an image of the subject and recording the obtained image data on a recording medium such as a memory card. A frame number (a file name) is assigned to a frame corresponding to an image represented by image data. In many
20 of the digital still cameras, the frame number is reset to start with one every time the memory card is replaced.

 The image data obtained by the imaging using the digital still camera is generally transferred to a personal computer from the digital still camera and temporarily stored in a hard disk
25 for the personal computer. As described above, the frame number is reset every time the memory card is replaced. Accordingly, the same frame number may, in some cases, be assigned to different

image data. In order to store the different image data having the same frame number in the same hard disk, the image data must be respectively stored in different folders. Therefore, a folder must be created for each memory card.

5 Even if a folder is created for each image pickup theme, frame numbers must be newly assigned to image data, respectively, such that they are not the same number using the personal computer in order to store the image data in the folder.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a digital still camera capable of assigning different frame numbers for each image pickup theme and a method of controlling the same.

15 A digital still camera according to the present invention is characterized by comprising an imaging device (means) for imaging a subject and outputting image data representing an image of the subject; an image pickup theme setting device (means) for setting an image pickup theme; a frame number storage device (means) for storing, for the image pickup theme set by the image pickup theme setting device, a frame number; a frame number
20 increment device (means) for incrementing, every time the subject is imaged by the imaging device, the frame number for the image pickup theme set by the image pickup theme setting device out of the frame numbers stored in the frame number storage device;
25 a storage control device (means) for controlling the frame number storage device such that the frame number incremented by the frame number increment device is stored for the corresponding image

pickup theme; and an image data recording control device (means)
for recording on a recording medium corresponding to the image
pickup theme set by the image pickup theme setting device data
representing the frame number incremented by the frame number
5 increment device and the image data outputted from the imaging
device by the imaging under the set image pickup theme with the
data and the image data related to each other.

The present invention also provides a method suitable for
the camera. That is, the method comprises the steps of allowing
10 an image pickup theme to be set; storing, for the set image pickup
theme, a frame number; imaging a subject, to obtain image data
representing an image of the subject; incrementing, every time
the subject is imaged, the frame number for the set image pickup
theme out of the stored frame numbers; storing the incremented
15 frame number for the corresponding image pickup theme; and
recording on a recording medium corresponding to the set image
pickup theme data representing the incremented frame number and
the image data obtained by the imaging under the set image pickup
theme with the data and the image data related to each other.

20 According to the present invention, the image pickup theme
can be set, and the frame number is stored for the image pickup
theme. The recording medium is determined for each image pickup
theme by a user. The recording medium corresponding to the set
image pickup theme is mounted on the digital still camera. When
25 the subject is imaged, the frame number for the set image pickup
theme out of the stored frame numbers is incremented. The
incremented frame number is stored. The data representing the

incremented frame number and the image data obtained by the
imaging are recorded on the recording medium corresponding to
the set image pickup theme. An inherent frame number is assigned
for each image pickup theme to the image data recorded on the
5 recording medium.

Specific methods of using are as follows. A folder is
created for each image pickup theme in a hard disk for a personal
computer. Image data recorded on a recording medium and data
representing a frame number are transmitted to the personal
10 computer. A folder storing the image data recorded on the
recording medium and the data representing the frame number is
dragged and dropped in the folder for each image pickup theme
which has already been created in the personal computer. The
frame number is not overlapped with the frame number assigned
15 to the image data which has already been stored in the folder.
A folder having image data for each image pickup theme can be
updated by only dragging and dropping the folder storing the image
data recorded on the recording medium and the data representing
the frame number in the folder for each image pickup theme which
20 has already been created in the personal computer. The image
data for each image pickup theme becomes easy to manage.

As the setting of an image pickup theme, a plurality of
image pickup themes may be stored, and the desired image pickup
theme may be selected out of the stored image pickup themes. The
25 image pickup theme becomes easy to set.

The foregoing and other objects, features, aspects and
advantages of the present invention will become more apparent

from the following detailed description of the present invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing the electrical configuration of a digital still camera;

 Fig. 2 illustrates the contents of a flash memory;

 Figs. 3 to 7 illustrate examples of a display screen of a monitor display device in the digital still camera;

10 Fig. 8 is a flow chart showing the procedure for processing performed when an image pickup theme is designated;

 Fig. 9 is a flow chart showing the procedure for imaging processing; and

 Fig. 10 illustrates an example of a display screen of a display device connected to a personal computer.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

 Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing the electrical configuration of a digital still camera.

20 The overall operation of the digital still camera is supervised by a CPU 10.

 The digital still camera comprises an operating (console) unit 11. The operating unit 11 comprises a mode setting key 12, an up-and-down key (a key for designating an up-direction and a key for designating a down-direction) 13, a right-and-left key (a key for designating a left-direction and a key for designating a right-direction) 14, and an execution key 15. A signal

representing the setting of the mode setting key 12, the up-and-down key 13, the right-and-left key 14, and the execution key 15 is inputted to the CPU 10.

The digital still camera further comprises a liquid crystal monitor display device 8. A setup screen and a subject image are displayed, as described later, on a display screen of the liquid crystal monitor display device 8.

The subject image is formed on a light receiving surface of an image pickup device 2 by an imaging lens 1. An image signal representing the subject image is outputted from the image pickup device 2, and is inputted to an analog signal processing circuit 3. In the analog signal processing circuit 3, predetermined analog signal processing such as CDS (correlated double sampling) and white balance processing is performed. The image signal outputted from the analog signal processing circuit 3 is inputted to an analog-to-digital conversion circuit 4. In the analog-to-digital conversion circuit 4, the image signal is converted into digital image data.

When digital image data obtained by the imaging is recorded on a memory card 20, the digital image data obtained by the conversion in the analog-to-digital conversion circuit 4 is first fed to an image memory 7 after merely passing through a digital signal processing circuit 5. The digital image data is temporarily stored in the image memory 7. Next, the digital image data is read out of the image memory 7, and is inputted to the digital signal processing circuit 5. In the digital signal processing circuit 5, predetermined digital signal processing

such as luminance data and color difference data generation processing and data compression processing is performed. The image data, which has already been subjected to the digital signal processing, outputted from the digital signal processing circuit 5 is recorded on the memory card 20.

The image data which has not been subjected to the data compression processing in the digital signal processing circuit 5 is fed to the liquid crystal monitor display device 8. The subject image is displayed on the screen of the liquid crystal monitor display device 8.

Furthermore, the digital still camera is provided with an output terminal (not shown). The digital still camera and an external monitor display device can be electrically connected to each other by the output terminal. The subject image obtained by the imaging can be displayed by the external monitor display device.

The digital still camera according to the present embodiment comprises a flash memory 6.

Fig. 2 illustrates the contents of the flash memory 6.

The flash memory 6 stores a frame number (a last frame number) corresponding to an image pickup theme. Examples of the image pickup theme include "FLOWER", "SPORTS", "PEOPLE", "SKY", "MOUNTAIN", "SEA", "ANIMAL", and "TRAVEL". "FLOWER" is an image pickup theme of flowers, "SPORTS" is an image pickup theme of sports, "PEOPLE" is an image pickup theme of people, "SKY" is an image pickup theme of skies, "MOUNTAIN" is an image pickup theme of mountains, "SEA" is an image pickup theme of seas,

"ANIMAL" is an image pickup theme of animals, and "TRAVEL" is an image pickup theme of travels. In the digital still camera according to the present embodiment, the image pickup theme can be set to be stored in the flash memory 6 in a theme setting processing (Fig. 8, steps 45-47) described later. A subject is imaged under an image pickup theme, to obtain image data representing an image of the subject. A frame number is assigned to the image data obtained by the imaging. In order that consecutive frame numbers are assigned to the image data for each imaging pickup theme, the last one of frame numbers which have been assigned at the time of the previous imaging under the image pickup theme is stored in the flash memory 6 for each imaging pickup theme.

When the image pickup theme is set, to image the subject, the frame number stored in the flash memory 6 with regard to the theme is incremented for each time when an image is picked-up, and the incremented frame number and the image data obtained by the imaging are recorded on the memory card 20 in correlation with each other.

The digital still camera according to the present embodiment is effective in the following case.

Assume that a user intends to pickup images of flowers. The image pickup theme is set to " FLOWER ". A memory card is mounted on and connected to the digital still camera. The user shoots flowers. Image data obtained by the imaging and representing images of flowers are stored in the memory card in correlation with consecutive frame numbers. The last frame

number is stored in the flash memory 6 in correspondence with the image pickup theme " FLOWER ".

When returning to the own house, the user removes the memory card from the digital still camera and mounts the removed
5 memory card on a personal computer. The image data stored in the memory card are transferred to the personal computer and recorded (copied) on a hard disk in the computer in correlation with the frame numbers. The image data and frame numbers in the memory card are erased.

10 Later, the erased and cleared memory card is again mounted on and connected to the digital still camera. Assume that flowers are picked-up again under the image pickup theme " FLOWER ". Since the last one of frame numbers which were assigned to the image data obtained in the preceding imaging has been stored in the
15 flash memory 6 in correspondence with the image pickup theme " FLOWER ", the consecutive frame numbers starting from the number next to the last frame number stored in the flash memory 6 are assigned to the new image data obtained in the succeeding imaging and the new image data are stored in the memory card in correlation
20 with the frame numbers. Even when the new image data and frame numbers assigned thereto are transferred to the hard disk of the personal computer from the memory card, no confusion will occur, because the frame numbers assigned to the preceding image data and frame numbers assigned to the succeeding image data are
25 consecutive and different from one another.

Figs. 3 to 7 illustrate an example of the display screen of the liquid crystal monitor display device 8. Fig. 8 is a flow

chart showing the procedure for setting and selection processing of the image pickup theme.

When a setup mode is set by the mode setting key 12 (step 41), a setup screen shown in Fig. 3 is displayed on the display screen of the monitor display device 8.

On the setup screen, examples of setup items include "COMPRESSION RATE", "NUMBER OF PIXELS", "FRAME NUMBER MEMORY", "DATE AND TIME", and "RESET". The item "COMPRESSION RATE" is for setting the compression rate of image data in the digital signal processing circuit 5. The item "NUMBER OF PIXELS" is for setting the number of pixels along the length and the width of an image represented by image data to be recorded. 1280 x 1024 pixels or 640 x 480 pixels can be set. The item "FRAME NUMBER MEMORY" is for determining one of three types: "ON", "OFF", and "THEME". When "ON" is set, a frame number next to the last one of the frame numbers which were assigned to the image data stored in the memory card 20 which is mounted in the digital still camera is assigned to new image data obtained by the imaging. When "OFF" is set, a frame number next to the last one of the frame numbers which were assigned to the image data stored in the memory card 20 which was used last is assigned to new image data obtained by the imaging. When "THEME" is set, consecutive frame numbers are assigned for each image pickup theme to new image data obtained by the imaging. The item "DATE AND TIME" is set when the date and time is set. The item "RESET" is set when set data is reset.

A cursor 31 is displayed on the setup screen. The up-key included in the up-and-down key 13 is pressed, so that the cursor

31 moves upward on the items. The down-key included in the up-and-down key 13 is pressed, so that the cursor 31 moves downward on the items. The right-and-left key 14 is pressed, so that the content of the item designated by the cursor 31 changes. The execution key 15 is pressed, so that the item designated by the cursor 31 is determined (confirmed).

When the cursor 31 designates the item "FRAME NUMBER MEMORY" (step 42), and "THEME" is set (step 43), a theme screen shown in Fig. 4 is displayed on the monitor display device 8.

On the theme screen, items "THEME SETTING" and "THEME SELECTION" are displayed. An arrow 32 is also displayed on the theme screen. The arrow 32 moves up and down between the item "THEME SETTING" and the item "THEME SELECTION" depending on the pressing of the up-and-down key 13.

The item "THEME SETTING" is designated by a user when an image pickup theme is newly registered (is stored in the flash memory 6). When the item "THEME SETTING" is designated, the up-and-down key 13 is operated such that the arrow 32 points to the item "THEME SETTING". Thereafter, the execution key 15 is pressed. The item "THEME SELECTION" is selected by the user when the image pickup theme is selected out of the image pickup themes which have already been registered. When the item "THEME SELECTION" is designated, the up-and-down key 13 is operated such that the arrow 32 points to the item "THEME SELECTION". Thereafter, the execution key 15 is pressed.

When the item "THEME SETTING" is designated (step 44), a theme setting screen shown in Fig. 5 is displayed on the display

screen of the liquid crystal monitor display device 8 (step 45).
An image pickup theme is newly registered while displaying the
theme setting screen on the liquid crystal monitor display device
8 (step 46).

5 A cursor 33 is displayed on the theme setting screen. The
up-and-down key 13 is pressed, so that alphabetic characters are
alphabetically displayed on the cursor 33. When the right-
and-left key 14 is pressed, the cursor 33 moves rightward, so
that the alphabetic character displayed on a position before the
10 movement of the cursor 33 is determined. The up-and-down key
13 is operated again until the desired alphabetic character is
displayed. When the alphabetic characters expressing the image
pickup theme is finally displayed, the execution key 15 is
pressed, so that the image pickup theme is determined. The image
15 pickup theme is stored in the flash memory 2 (step 47). When
the image pickup theme is newly registered, it goes without saying
that the last frame number is set to "DSC00001" (frame number
0) in the flash memory 6 with regard to the newly registered theme.

When the item "THEME SELECTION" is designated on the theme
20 screen, as shown in Fig. 6, a theme selection screen shown in
Fig. 7 is displayed on the display screen of the monitor display
device 8 (step 48).

On the theme selection screen, a list of the image pickup
themes stored in the flash memory 6 is displayed. When all the
25 image pickup themes cannot be displayed on the display screen
of the monitor display device 8, it goes without saying that an

image pickup theme other than the image pickup themes currently displayed is displayed by operating the up-and-down key 13.

A cursor 34 is also displayed on the theme selection screen. The up-and-down key 13 is pressed, so that the cursor
5 34 moves among the image pickup themes. The execution key 15 is pressed, so that the image pickup theme designated by the cursor 34 is determined (step 49).

Fig. 9 is a flow chart showing the procedure for processing in a case where image data obtained by imaging is recorded on
10 the memory card.

When an imaging mode is set by the mode setting key 12, a subject is imaged by the image pickup device 2 in the above-mentioned manner (step 51). That is, when a shutter release button (not shown) is pushed, image data representing an image
15 of the subject is temporarily stored in the image memory 7 (imaging). A (last) frame number corresponding to an image pickup theme set or selected in the setup mode, as described above, is read out of the flash memory 6 (step 52). The frame number read out is incremented because it is the last frame number relating
20 to image data which was recorded last with regard to the image pickup theme, so that overlapping of the frame number is avoided (step 53). The incremented frame number is stored in the flash memory 6 for the corresponding image pickup theme (step 54). When image data fails to be recorded on the memory card 20, it goes
25 without saying that the frame number is returned to the original frame number again.

Data representing the incremented frame number and the image data obtained by the imaging are recorded on the memory card 20 with the data and the image data related to each other by being stored in the same file (step 55).

5 In the above-mentioned processing, it goes without saying that the memory card 20 for an image pickup theme which is to be set or selected by the user is mounted on the digital still camera.

10 Fig. 10 illustrates an example of a display screen of a display device connected to a personal computer.

 The memory card 20 in which the image data and the data representing the frame number are stored in the same file (Fig. 9 step 55) is separated from the digital still camera, and is mounted on a memory card slot in the personal computer. The file
15 recorded on the memory card 20 is read, and is recorded on a hard disk for the personal computer. A folder 61 named "Memory Card" appears on the display screen of the display device connected to the personal computer. Files respectively storing image data which are assigned frame numbers "DSC00011" to "DSC00030" and
20 represent images relating to flowers (the image pickup theme "FLOWER") shall be stored in the folder 61 named "Memory Card". This is based on the following fact and assumption. That is, as shown in Fig. 2, the last frame number corresponding to the image pickup theme " FLOWER " was " DSC00010 ". Assume that
25 twenty frames of images have been imaged by the digital still camera under the image pickup theme " FLOWER ". Accordingly, the frame numbers corresponding to the image data obtained by

the imaging and stored in the memory card 20 are from " DSC00011
" to " DSC00030 " .

5 Folders having names corresponding to the above-
mentioned image pickup themes shall be stored in the hard disk
for the personal computer. In Fig. 10, a folder 62 named "FLOWER",
a folder 63 named "SPORTS", a folder 64 named "PEOPLE", and a
folder 65 named "SKY" are illustrated. Files respectively having
frame numbers "DSC00001" to "DSC00010" (the frame number
"DSC00010" was stored in the flash memory 6 in the digital still
10 camera as the last frame number in the image pickup theme "FLOWER")
shall be already stored in the folder 62 named "FLOWER".

The folder 61 named "Memory Card" is dragged and dropped
in the folder 62 named "FLOWER", so that image data respectively
representing images having a unified image pickup theme of
15 flowers shall be stored in the folder 62 named "FLOWER". Further
the frame numbers of the image data (files) stored in the folder
62 are " DSC00001 " ~ " DSC00030 " . A folder for each image pickup
theme, which stores image data under the image pickup theme, can
be created relatively easily. Folders can be also arranged
20 relatively easily.

Although the present invention has been described and
illustrated in detail, it is clearly understood that the same
is by way of illustration and example only and is not to be taken
by way of limitation, the spirit and scope of the present invention
25 being limited only by the terms of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A digital still camera comprising:
 - an imaging device for imaging a subject and outputting image data representing an image of the subject;
 - 5 an image pickup theme setting device for setting an image pickup theme;
 - a frame number storage device for storing, for the image pickup theme set by said image pickup theme setting device, a frame number;
 - 10 a frame number increment device for incrementing, every time the subject is imaged by said imaging device, the frame number for the image pickup theme set by said image pickup theme setting device out of the frame numbers stored in said frame number storage device;
 - 15 a storage control device for controlling said frame number storage device such that the frame number incremented by said frame number increment device is stored for the corresponding image pickup theme; and
 - an image data recording control device for recording on
20 a recording medium data representing the frame number incremented by said frame number increment device and the image data outputted from said imaging device by the imaging under the image pickup theme set by said image pickup theme setting device with the data and the image data related to each other.
- 25 2. The digital still camera according to claim 1, wherein said image pickup theme setting device comprises

an image pickup theme storage device for storing a plurality of image pickup themes; and

an image pickup theme selection device for selecting the image pickup theme out of the image pickup themes stored in said
5 image pickup theme storage device.

3. A method of controlling a digital still camera, comprising the steps of:

allowing an image pickup theme to be set;

storing, for the set image pickup theme, a frame number;

10 imaging a subject, to obtain image data representing an image of the subject;

incrementing, every time the subject is imaged, the frame number for the set image pickup theme out of the stored frame numbers;

15 storing the incremented frame number for the corresponding image pickup theme; and

recording on a recording medium data representing the incremented frame number and the image data obtained by the imaging under the set image pickup theme with the data and the
20 image data related to each other.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In order to easily manage image data for each image pickup theme, the last one of consecutive frame numbers for the image pickup theme is stored in a flash memory in a digital still camera.

- 5 When the image pickup theme is set, the last frame number for the image pickup theme are read out of the flash memory, and new frame numbers are assigned to image data obtained by imaging such that they are consecutive frame numbers in the image pickup theme. Since the consecutive frame numbers are assigned for the image pickup theme, the image data for the image pickup theme become
10 relatively easy to manage.

Fig. 1

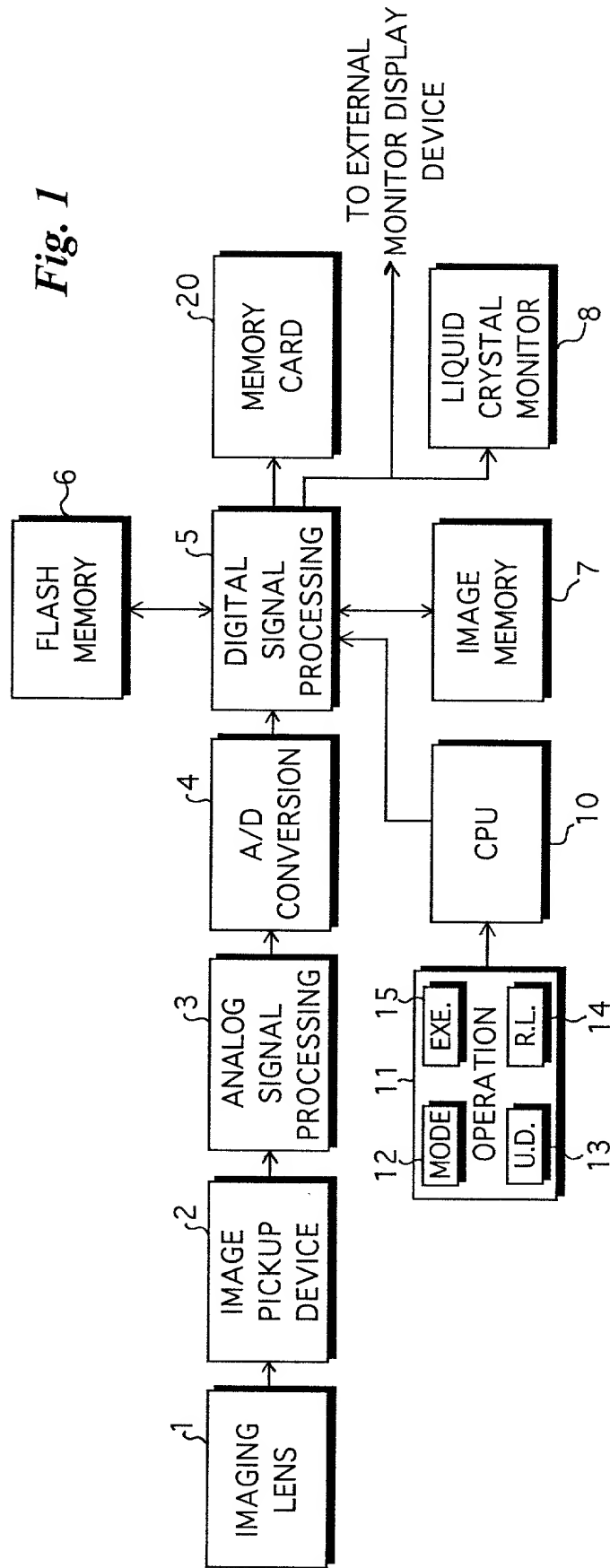


Fig. 2

IMAGE PICKUP THEME	FLAME NUMBER
FLOWER	DSC.00010
SPORTS	DSC.00030
PEOPLE	DSC.00024
SKY	DSC.00012
MOUNTAIN	DSC.00000
SEA	DSC.00050
ANIMAL	DSC.00005
TRAVEL	DSC.00100
⋮	⋮

Fig. 3

SET-UP	
COMPRESSION PATE	: NORMAL
NUMBER OF PIXELS	: 1280×1024
FRAME NUMBER MEMORY	: THEME
DATE AND TIME	: SET
RESET	: EXECUTE

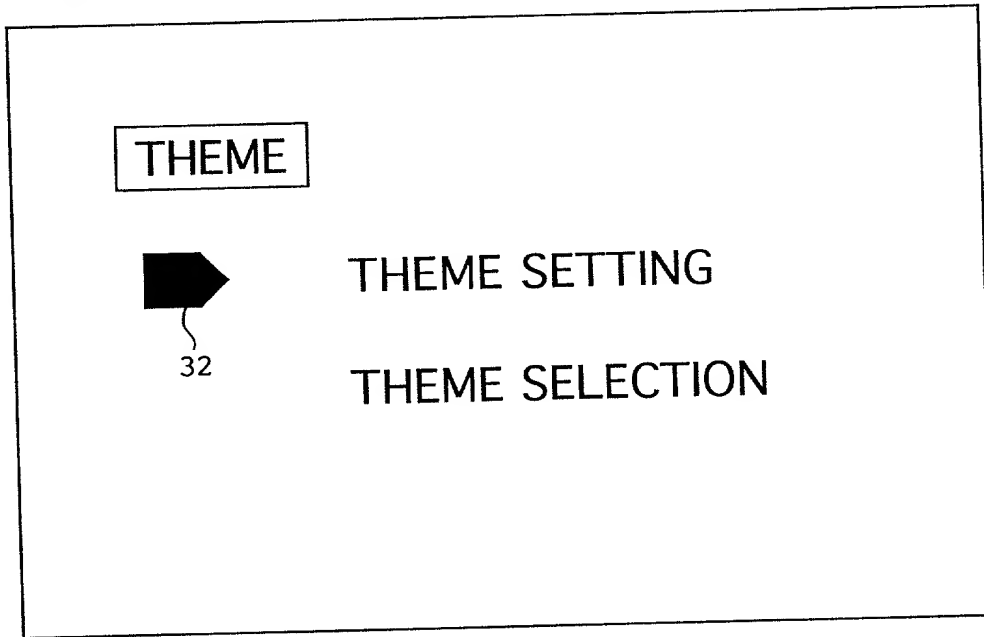
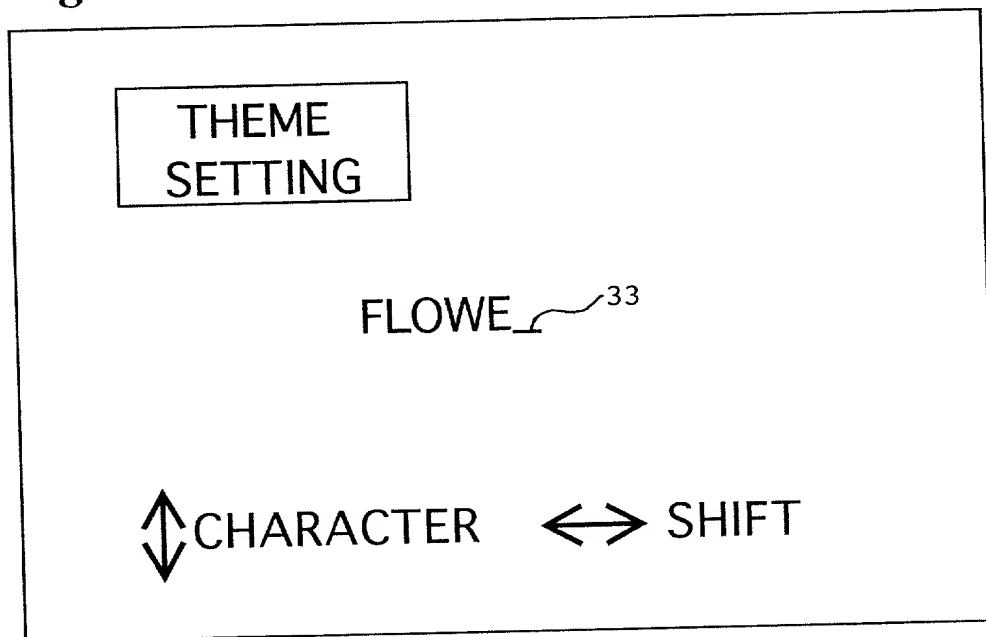
Fig. 4*Fig. 5*

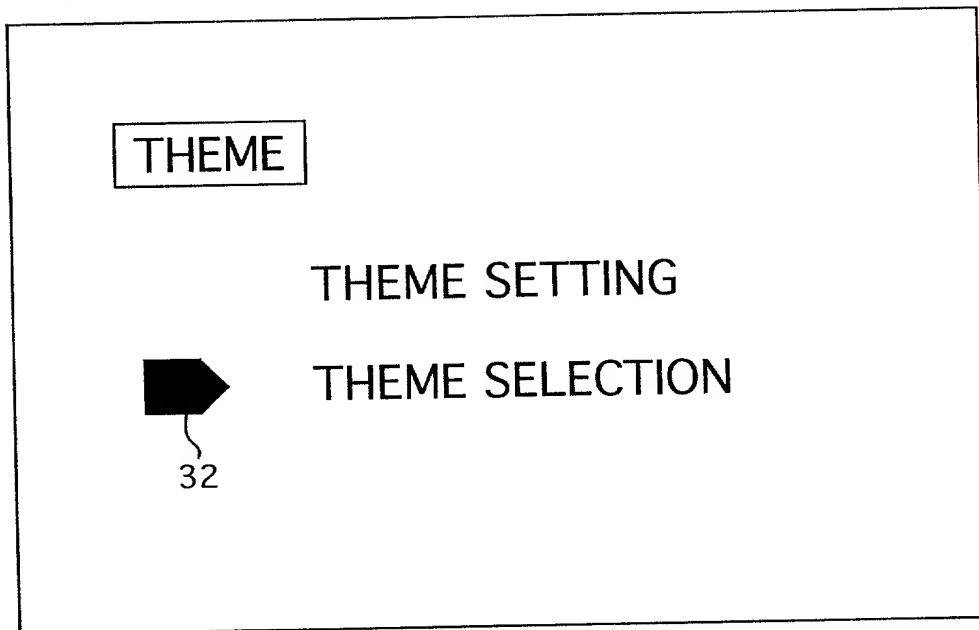
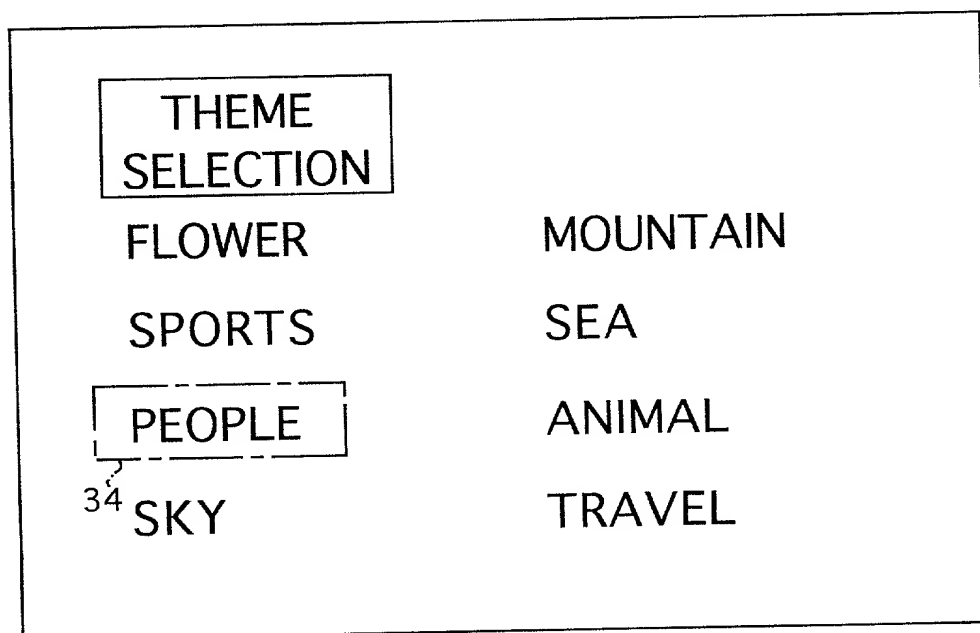
Fig. 6*Fig. 7*

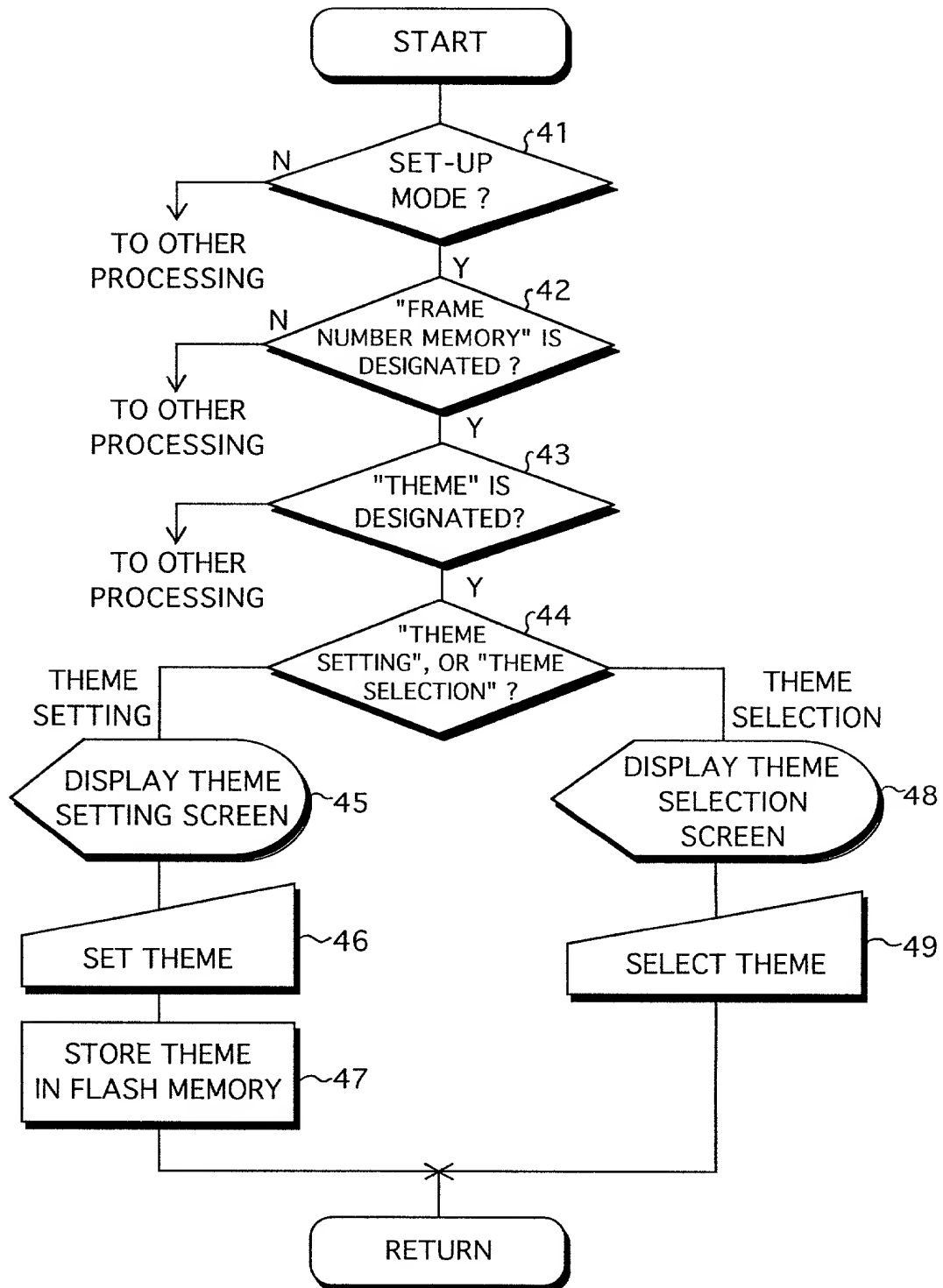
Fig. 8

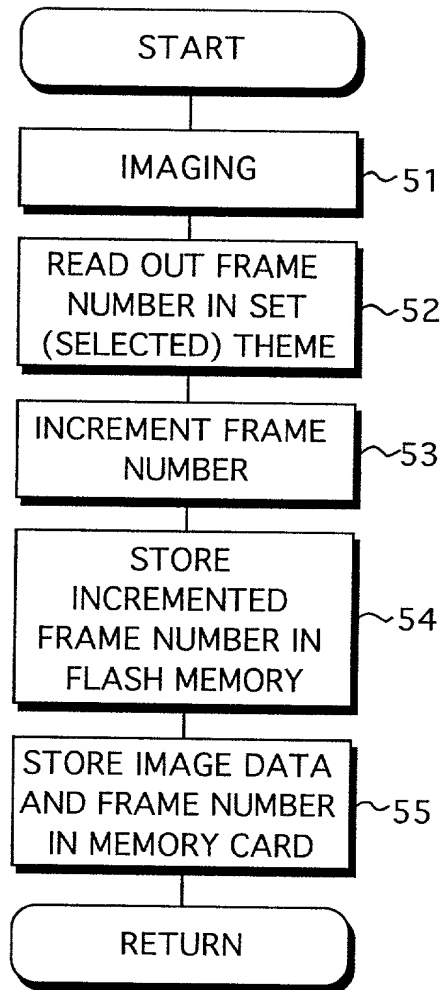
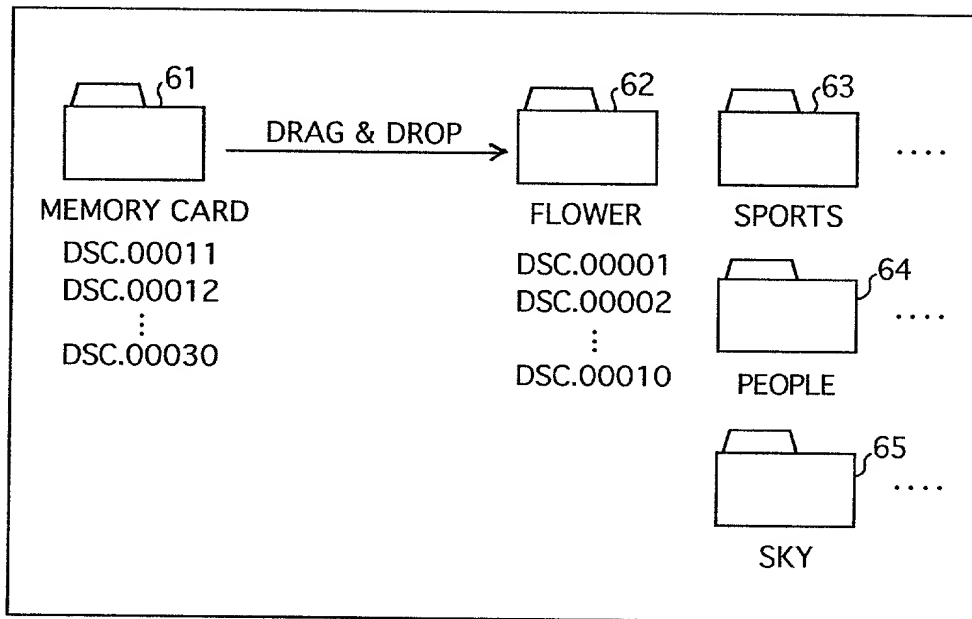
Fig. 9

Fig. 10

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COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT AND DESIGN APPLICATIONS

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that: my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name; that I verily believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one inventor is named below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural inventors are named below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

Insert Title:

DIGITAL STILL CAMERA AND METHOD OF CONTROLLING THE SAME

Fill in Appropriate
Information -
For Use Without
Specification
Attached:

the specification of which is attached hereto. If not attached hereto,

the specification was filed on _____ as

United States Application Number _____;

and amended on _____ (if applicable) and/or

the specification was filed on _____ as PCT

International Application Number _____; and was

amended under PCT Article 19 on _____ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I do not know and do not believe the same was ever known or used in the United States of America before my or our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my or our invention thereof or more than one year prior to this application, that the same was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application, that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representative or assigns more than twelve months (six months for designs) prior to this application, and that no application for patent or inventor's certificate on this invention has been filed in any country foreign to the United States of America prior to this application by me or my legal representatives or assigns, except as follows.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119(a)-(d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Insert Priority
Information:
(if appropriate)

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Claimed

JP11-104811	Japan	04/13/1999	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)		
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)		
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)		
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
(Number)	(Country)	(Month/Day/Year Filed)		

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §119(e) of any United States provisional applications(s) listed below.

Insert Provisional
Application(s):
(if any)

_____	_____
(Application Number)	(Filing Date)
_____	_____
(Application Number)	(Filing Date)

All Foreign Applications, if any, for any Patent or Inventor's Certificate Filed More than 12 Months (6 Months for Designs) Prior to the Filing Date of This Application:

Country	Application Number	Date of Filing (Month/Day/Year)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Insert Requested
Information:
(if appropriate)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States and/or PCT application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States and/or PCT application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

Insert Prior U.S.
Application(s):
(if any)

_____	_____	_____
(Application Number)	(Filing Date)	(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)
_____	_____	_____
(Application Number)	(Filing Date)	(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby appoint the following attorneys to prosecute this application and/or an international application based on this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and in connection with the resulting patent based on instructions received from the entity who first sent the application papers to the attorneys identified below, unless the inventor(s) or assignee provides said attorneys with a written notice to the contrary:

Raymond C. Stewart	(Reg. No. 21,066)	Terrell C. Birch	(Reg. No. 19,382)
Joseph A. Kolasch	(Reg. No. 22,463)	James M. Slattery	(Reg. No. 28,380)
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Send Correspondence to:

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PLEASE NOTE:
YOU MUST
COMPLETE
THE
FOLLOWING:

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full Name of First
or Sole Inventor:
Insert Name of
Inventor →
Insert Date This
Document is Signed

Insert Residence
Insert Citizenship →

Insert Post Office
Address →

Full Name of Second
Inventor, if any:
see above

Full Name of Third
Inventor, if any:
see above

Full Name of Fourth
Inventor, if any:
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GIVEN NAME/FAMILY NAME Takashi SOGA		INVENTOR'S SIGNATURE <i>Takashi Soga</i>	DATE* March 30, 2000
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GIVEN NAME/FAMILY NAME		INVENTOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE*
Residence (City, State & Country)		CITIZENSHIP	
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GIVEN NAME/FAMILY NAME		INVENTOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE*
Residence (City, State & Country)		CITIZENSHIP	
POST OFFICE ADDRESS (Complete Street Address including City, State & Country)			
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Residence (City, State & Country)		CITIZENSHIP	
POST OFFICE ADDRESS (Complete Street Address including City, State & Country)			

*DATE OF SIGNATURE